10: d'Orleans--296-297 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.65 Siam
636.65

"We find that a people is being formed; if there is not a sentiment of nationality the governing power is becoming autocratic and an administrative centralization is being effected to its profit, under the control and the direction of the Siamese. The local rulers are in communication with Bangkok, even if they have not been on a visit there; they are learning to appreciate luxury, and they are upon the point of arming their troops with European weapons, of increasing their effective, and lending aid to the forces of the invaders. In order to obtain these charming results of what may be called 'the new civilisation,' much money is needed, but if the king's expenditure has increased it has not been so with the earnings of the people. The latter were not consulted when a tax was put upon opium 'for their good,' when the tchoum-tchoum was made a monopoly, or when a capitation tax of eight rupees for each man and six for each woman was imposed. The consequence is that they are discontented and unable to make any further payments, mandarins from all parts of the kingdom writing that the villagers are willing enough to come to the capital and take the oath, but empty-handed. Last year several had to sell what they possessed, and now they are endeavouring to borrow, and are murmuring [297] against those who have ruined them. The peasants bow the head in subjection because they see no liberator; but the first man who comes forward with some arms and a relatively small sum of money, in order to drive out the Siamese, may be assured of encountering an enthusiastic and almost unanimous welcome from the population."

10: d'Orleans--298-299 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 208, 647, 651 177.64 France
636.64

"To revert to Luang Prabang, we have a Vice-Consul there, or rather an agent, for he has not got an exequatur. Assisted by twelve interpreters, he does wonders with the limited means at his disposal, but as he is generally short of money and is obliged to borrow from the Chinese to pay the staff, he cannot do much to uphold French interests. The most he can do is to keep up the few friends whom he has gained for us by his personal influence and winning ways. For his title of French agent weighs as nothing in the balance compared to his personal popularity, so that he is seconded but not feared, for it is known that he cannot speak out, that his threats will remain a dead letter, that he is not backed up, and that the Foreign Office seems indifferent to the Mekong question. Compare our mode of action to that of the English in Xieng Maï, a Laos State bordering on Burmah and similarly situated to Luang Prabang. At Xieng Maï there is a consul with an exequatur, that is to say duly recognized by the native Government and his own, well [299] paid and backed up by his superiors, having under his own orders several thousand British protégés and holding very much the same position as the Siamese Commissioner here, this latter being everything while we are nothing."